

Chapter 841 Foolish

Merlin and Manley exchanged another synchronized nod. Nobody could deny the truth. Elliana carried herself with the grace of royalty. She embodied independence and never relied on anyone for support.

Cole gave a slight nod in response. There was no way he could refute the reasoning Allan had laid out. Truthfully, he already anticipated where Allan was headed.

Allan didn't hesitate. "Elliana's upset because you've been overly protective," he said plainly. "She's more than capable of handling her own problems. When things go wrong, she wants to face the storm at your side. But instead of being truthful when everything fell apart, you pushed her away and insisted on a divorce for the sake of protecting her. No wonder she's furious with you."

Merlin and Manley appeared to have a sudden realization. Their eager nods made it clear they fully agreed with Allan's point of view.

Cole looked down, a shadow crossing his features. In his heart, he had sensed the truth from the very beginning. He just hadn't been ready to admit it to himself. In the end, it was his stubborn pride that had led to the divorce. Whenever difficulties arose, he instinctively wanted to shelter Elliana, never considering that she might want to share in the struggle.

Allan continued without pause, "Elliana didn't ask for that letter just to punish you. She wanted you to truly see her and understand what she truly hopes for. She's waiting for a specific promise. If you're not prepared to offer that, she won't agree to give you another chance."

A heavy silence fell over Cole. His understanding of Elliana wasn't the problem. It was the pain he couldn't stand to see her endure. That was why, in writing the application, he danced around the real issue, purposefully avoiding the heart of what she truly needed. But Allan's words stripped away every excuse. The truth he had been avoiding was now impossible to ignore.

Cole realized that if he wanted Elliana to take him back, he would have to make the promise she had been waiting for and honor it faithfully for the rest of their lives. However, the thought of allowing her to suffer alongside him tore him apart. What he wanted more than anything was to give her nothing but happiness for as long as he could.

Although Merlin and Manley agreed with Allan, neither dared to say a word. Cole's silence was sacred. They understood him perfectly. Whether Cole would make that promise was a choice only he could make. They knew better than to meddle.

Allan had no intention of staying quiet. As his patience wore thin, he added, "Don't forget, we still have a deal to finish!"

The spell of quiet broke. Cole lifted his eyes and answered with a single name, his tone cold and steady, "Adah."

Both Merlin and Manley stared in shock. Why would Cole abruptly mention Adah, the unremarkable girl from some backwater town?

Allan froze, his whole body tensing as if someone had landed a blow. Could it be that the woman he'd been desperately searching for—the one who had captured his heart at first glance—was actually Adah? The same "ordinary bumpkin" he had once dismissed and broken the engagement with?

"Cole, you're actually serious about this, aren't you?" Allan asked, narrowing his eyes as disbelief crept into his tone.

Cole rose from his seat and walked toward the exit. "Believe what you want." Without another word, he swung the door open and slipped out.

Allan could only stare after Cole for a moment before sinking into the couch, overwhelmed by despair. One hand came up to cover his eyes, and a harsh, bitter laugh escaped him. How could he have missed something so obvious? Since Elliana—a stunning beauty—could disguise herself as an ugly woman, why wouldn't her closest friend, Adah, be capable of doing the same? Maybe the image of the "plain bumpkin" was nothing but a carefully crafted act.

As Allan started piecing everything together, it hit him: Ava and Adah were uncannily alike in every way that mattered. She had outwitted him from the very beginning, and he'd never managed to see past her mask.

He couldn't believe how foolish he had been.

Not long ago, the group was all united in teasing Cole over his struggle to win his wife back. Now, it was Allan's turn to taste humiliation.

There was a time Allan would have gladly paid three billion just to be free of Adah. Now, even if he threw in three hundred billion, it wouldn't be enough to make Ava return to him. The situation was utterly hopeless.

The longer Allan dwelled on it, the deeper his regret became. In frustration, he dug his fingers into his hair, pulling at it roughly. Heartbreak had already stripped him of his polished exterior, leaving nothing but a wreck in its place. Now, he seemed completely unraveled, lost in a spiral of self-loathing.

As Allan's composure fell apart, Merlin and Manley finally connected the dots and exchanged glances, a wave of sympathy passing between them.

"Unbelievable." Manley shook his head in disbelief. "Adah, the so-called plain bumpkin, and Elliana really are a perfect pair. Both gorgeous, but they went to such lengths to look hideous. What a bizarre way to bond."

Merlin chimed in thoughtfully, "Elliana's disguise made sense. She needed to keep the Jones family and her enemies off her trail. But who exactly was Adah hoping to deceive by making herself look so ordinary?"

The question lingered in the air, and both Merlin and Manley turned to fix their gaze on Allan. Their looks said everything. The truth was clear, and it was obvious that Adah had gone to all that trouble just to fool Allan. She had never wanted anything to do with Allan. To break off their engagement, she had done everything possible to make herself unappealing, certain that it would drive him away.

Allan felt their stares cut straight through him, wounding his pride far more deeply than anything Cole had experienced. Realizing Adah had deliberately made herself unattractive just to escape him felt like a thousand sharp blades tearing into his heart. Was he truly so unbearable that she'd resort to such extremes—hiding behind an ugly exterior—just to get rid of him?